

NEWS AMERICAN

JAN 4 1976

E - 208,274

S - 283,774

Congress's Leaks Undermine U. S. Foreign Policy

By KINGSBURY SMITH
News American Bureau

WASHINGTON—A state of congressional monarchy in respect to U.S. foreign policy is threatening to cripple American leadership of the free world.

The assumption by individual senators and congressmen of the right to leak highly secret intelligence information without congressional policy on such action, or even approval by the committees to which they belong, is, in effect, giving each member of Congress virtual veto power over the conduct of American foreign policy.

Central Intelligence Agency Director William Colby has said that almost everything concerning secret operations reported to six congressional committees during the past month has been leaked to the news media. Rep. Wayne Hays, D-Ohio, admits that Congress has become "leaky as a sieve."

Congressional disclosures about and opposition to American assistance to anti-Communist political parties in Europe and Africa are aiding Soviet expansion. They are destroying what little is left of the confidence of other nations in the reliability of America as an ally.

They will strengthen neutralist sentiment in Europe and make it easier for Moscow to politically coerce smaller countries to submit to its influence.

To a newcomer to Washington who has spent the past nine years abroad, there seems to be an appalling lack of realization on the part of many liberal, isolationist and politically self-serving members of Congress that the free world, including the United States, is engaged in a struggle for independent survival.

There appears to be an incredible blindness to the clear evidence that Russia's rulers still are striving to achieve Soviet domination of the world and to replace the

American way of life with totalitarianism. Let anyone who thinks this is cold war rhetoric read the reports of the British Institute of Strategic Studies, the Study of Conflict, the NATO council, or the Western European Union Assembly.

While it is understandable that Congress wishes to avoid another Vietnam-type involvement and wants to prevent uncontrolled CIA excesses, it is incomprehensible that senators and congressmen consider it a public duty to leak secret information the disclosure of which it endangers America's allies and friends, undermines the American intelligence service, and serves the interests of Soviet imperialism and world communism.

The leaking of information that \$6 million of CIA funds have been funnelled to Italy's anti-Communist political parties since Dec. 8 — subsequently denied by Colby — is a shocking example of irresponsibility.

Within 24 hours of this disclosure, the Christian Democratic-led Italian government fell. While the disclosure about the CIA funds was not directly responsible, the collapse of the Moro government may lead to general elections this year.

There already are indica-

Commentary

tions that the Communists are likely to make the CIA funds disclosure a major issue in the general election campaign if it is held this year.

The Communist Party of Italy (CPI) immediately seized on the CIA news to accuse the United States of "brutal interference" in Italy's domestic affairs. In the last regional elections, the CPI came within a few points of outvoting the Christian Democratic Party (CDP), which, as the dominant political party for nearly 30 years, has kept democracy alive in Italy.

With the CDP in a dangerously weakened position, the propaganda use the Communists would make of the disclosure that Christian Democratic leaders had received millions of dollars in CIA money could tip the balance in favor of the CPI in general elections this year.

It may mean that American senators and congressmen, apparently blind to the realities of the world situation, will help the Communist Party emerge as the dominant political force in Italy. It may mean that it will no longer be possible to keep

the Communists out of the Italian government. It could mean that within the next few years, Italy will pull out of NATO and go neutral, making the Mediterranean unsafe for the U.S. 6th Fleet and leaving Southern Europe and North Africa at the mercy of Soviet domination.

Those are the potential consequences of the attempts by individual members of Congress to control American foreign policy through

the leakage of government secrets in flagrant violation of the confidence under which the information is given.

If Congress wishes to play a direct role in the formulation of American foreign policy, it should determine what it wants that policy to be by a vote in both houses and not allow individual members of the Senate and the House to attempt to run foreign policy on their own.

If Congress wishes to control the activities of American intelligence agencies, it should define the limits of those activities. When it has done so, it should impose

severe mandatory penalties on leaks of information concerning those activities.

The legislative and executive branches of the federal government should reach agreement on the basic aims of American foreign policy — on whether and to what extent American financial and other aid should be given to those resisting Soviet domination — and dictatorship, whether of the left or right.

If Congress and the administration cannot agree on what should be the objectives of American foreign policy, and how that policy should be implemented, the issue should be put to the American people. A good time to do so might be in the November presidential election.

The American people, and not some individual members of Congress, should decide whether America is going to abdicate its leadership of the free world.